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BRIEF REFUTAL

OF THE

REPORT OF THE ST.-DOMINGO COMMISSIONERS;

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ADDRESSED TO

THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

[By Many Dominicans]

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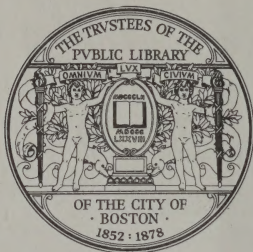
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A BRIEF REFUTAL

OF THE

REPORT OF THE St. DOMINGO COMMISSIONERS,

ADDRESSED TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

The Report of the American Commissioners sent to the Dominican Republic to study men and things, only shows an odious partiality, as it was expected by all intelligent people.—All that dishonesty could suggest, in order to color the investigation, was made subservient to the selfish views of Baez, supported by his accomplice, President Grant.

Certainly, that miserable paper was of too little importance to change the public sentiment, and its results will be contrary to the triumph of the annexionist interest. The false statements and the violent judgements it contains are so glaring, that by the simple reading of any part of it, it will be easily perceived that its authors have not only to contend against historical truth, but they set aside all rules of fairness and justice in order to serve the private interests of a few, to the prejudice of the general interests of two countries.

But this circumstance is not sufficient to appease our mind, naturally alarmed; nor could it, hereafter, answer the purpose of justifying us, should posterity charge us with having neglected the defence of our national interests, just when this were abruptly trampled under foot by the ambition and selfishness of a few unprincipled men. We, therefore, undertake the patriotic task of refuting the erroneous statements contained in the Commissioner's Report alluded to, both to neutralize the injurious effects of calumny and to purify the truth of history, assigning to every thing its proper place.

In doing this, we shall insult nobody, will not interfere with other people's conscience, nor will unjustly attack any determined person. But, on the other hand, we shall not hesitate in raising our voice against mendacity, which can never be made a virtue of, even if used in favor of a good cause, and must, therefore, always be held as infamous.

I.

The Commissioners commence their Report, just as if they wished to predispose the public sentiment against the impulse under which they were acting, by stating that, after spending *several weeks in the Capital, in daily conferences with the President and chief officers of the Government*, they traversed the Republic, *from end to end, in several directions*, one of them traversing it from North to South, and another from East to West, visiting besides the *vicinity of the Western border country, where it was reported that there were disturbances.*

That they remained in St. Domingo city long enough to make a correct judgement about the true spirit of the country, had they been acting impartially, is not only an unquestionable truth, but it is also the most remarkable circumstance. It is strange that while twenty-two days

were necessary for them to come to an understanding with Baez and his ministers, they should not have needed as many days, at least, for the study of men and things in the rest of the Republic.

Mr. Andrew White, with the scientific party, if it may be so called, undertook to traverse the country from South to North, but only allowed to their travelling the time necessary for going through that distance, with the velocity of a post. Leaving Santo Domingo, on the 22d of February, he sailed from Puerto Plata, according to Baez's Official Bulletin, N.º 159, on the 5th of March, having already visited Cotui, Concepcion de la Vega, Moca, Santiago de los Caballeros, Altamira and the said port of embarkation, and *given eloquent testimony of the freedom of the plebiscit.*

If it be taken into account that the distance from Santo Domingo to Puerto Plata, by an air line, is about three hundred leagues; that the roads are so bad that travelling is only possible on horse or mule back; and that Moca being not in the same direction, Mr. White had to deviate from his itinerary about ten leagues towards the interior, it will at once be seen that eleven days were not more than sufficient for him to traverse that distance with difficulty, and that, consequently, he could not have time enough left for prosecuting at each town his important investigations.

Now, if to this faithful account be added that the department of Cibao comprises also San Francisco de Macoris, San Lorenzo de Guayubin, San José de las Matas, Montecristi, Jarabacoa, Bonao, Sabaneta, Jánico, Dajabon, Matanzas and other towns, that neither Mr. White nor any of the gentlemen that accompanied him was pleased to visit, as they might be expected to do,—no great effort will be necessary to perceive that there has been no veracity in assuring that the commission studied Cibao in all direc-

tions, thus being enabled to ascertain the ratification of the plebiscit.

Nor were more exact nor less hasty Messrs. Benjamin Wade and Samuel Howe, who, with the other party, undertook to investigate the department that runs from East to West. Leaving behind them two thirds of the district, comprising the towns of Yamazá, Monte Plata, Boyá, Bayaguaná, San Antonio de Guerra, San José de los Llanos, Hato Mayor, Santa Cruz del Seibo and Higüey, they started from Santo Domingo for Azúa de Compostela on the 22d of February, the former by sea, and the latter by land, and only needed six days to declare their work terminated, since, on the 28th, they sailed from Tortuguero on board the steamer Tennessee, bound to the Capital of the Haytian Republic.

As it may be seen by this simple statement, Mr. Howe travelled through the fifty leagues distance from Santo Domingo to Azúa de Compostela, in only four days; a lapse of time more than insufficient for the examination of the richness of the country, and the simultaneous investigation of the tendencies of the people on the subject of annexation.

And, if it be further taken into account that Mr. Wade, who travelled at great ease, accompanying President Baez, on board the Tennessee, which escorted Baez's men of war carrying to Azúa a reinforcement of 800 men, never stepped forward from the point of his landing, notwithstanding the suspension of General Cabral's military operations, consequent upon the announced visit of the investigating commission, it will be fully demonstrated, anything stated in the Report and repeated by the St. Domingo Official Bulletin to the contrary notwithstanding, that the Commissioners have not properly studied the subject of annexation, nor have traversed the country in all directions, nor

are they enabled to do justice to the majority of the Dominican people.

It would be necessary for Messrs. Wade and Howe, before they could assert that they had visited the neighborhood of the Western boundaries, to have travelled by the way of Neiva, running over 35 leagues to the Dominican-Haitian frontier, or to have gone through San Juan, in which case they had ten more leagues to run over.

Then, they would have had a chance of being acquainted with San Juan de la Maguana, Las Matas de Garfan, El Cercado, Bánica, and Rancho Mateo on one side; and on the other side, with Barahona, Rincon, Neiva, Las Damas and Petitrú; important and industrious towns which do not acknowledge Baez's government, and that give their decided support to Cabral, with the only hope of saving the Republic from the danger of an ignominious disappearance that threatens her.

A trip to the insurgent districts of the South would have enlightened the Commissioners, if they wished it, much better than the *supplementary investigations* they made during a week at the capital of Hayti. Here, the same as at San Domingo, they did nothing but collect partial information, with only this difference, that at the latter place they received it from Baez and his Ministers, while at the former they only received it from the American Minister, whose regard for the annexation project is notorious in all America.

And we affirm that they only listened favorably to the news communicated by their own diplomatic representative, because we have been surprised not to find in their Report a single word about the information that might have been given to them by General Wenceslao Alvarez and the citizen Juan Francisco Travieso, deputed by General Cabral, and with whom they had a long conference at Port-au-Prince,

on the 9th of March. The Commissioners, on this occasion, not only recognized the South as belligerent, but they paid a tribute of justice to the rights of the Chief of the Dominican Republic, offering him to go to Jamaica, in order to consult, by telegraph, with President Grant, in regard to the proposed voyage of one or more of them to the insurrectionary districts. (*Vide official note from Messrs. Andrew D. White and Samuel Howe to General José Maria Cabral, dated at Port-au-Prince, March 9th 1871.*)

The remarkable circumstance of the Commissioners having assigned as the reason for their touching at Jamaica the want of coal, thus carefully concealing in their Report the true cause of it, is not only the best evidence we can furnish of the negative answer of President Grant to the proposed understanding with Cabral, but it is also one of the strongest reasons on which we rest the charge of partiality we have made from the beginning.

We shall refer to other no less persuasive reasons in the course of this brief refutation. Meanwhile, we believe that we have demonstrated with incontrovertible facts, that the first part of the Report of the St. Domingo Commissioners, does not accord with truth, which is the principal foundation of all writings of the same nature.

II.

After explaining with more or less accuracy the form of the Dominican Government, which they call *theoretically* constitutional and republican, the Commissioners come to the most important part of their Report; that which has reference to the political position of the country.

This would have been the most arduous part of their study for men that were not acting under express and positive orders; and that which would command the most

thorough examination. But, for the Commissioners sent to St. Domingo, it was the simplest of all.

Being guided by the idea of supporting anyhow the annexation project, forged by Baez and accepted by Grant, their judgements, one and all, are subordinated to the principal view.

Thus, they do not hesitate to assert that they found Baez *in full and peaceable possession of all parts of the Republic, except on the Haytian border, which is disturbed by insurrectionary leaders, aided by Haytians, and political intriguers and emissaries who have congregated at various points in the neighboring islands.*

And, in stating further that *the insurrections still existing are headed by Cabral and Luperon*, they carry their partiality to the extreme, asserting that the former, although more important than the latter, *has not a distinct flag or a regularly organized army; neither is the exponent of a clearly defined policy; and they add, that both seem animated by interests, attachments and resentments purely personal.*

And so, they come, in conclusion, to state as an incontrovertible truth, that the liberating national revolution possesses no power which gives it any hold on public opinion, *beyond the territory it occupies.*

On reading so violent judgements, so slight appreciations, the question naturally suggests itself; whence did the Commissioners derive the information that has served as a starting point for their curious Report?

It being evident that they refused to go to the South, either because President Grant forbade it, or because they thought it unnecessary, notwithstanding the reiterated invitations of General Cabral and the pressing requests of his agents, how did they dare speak so knowingly about the state of a revolution, the inside circumstances of which they were unacquainted with? What proofs have they that

the Dominican patriots are aided by the republic of Hayti?

It is not known by all impartial people that the revolution which is harmoniously headed by Cabral in the South, and Luperon in the North, essentially represents the national idea, supported by an army of patriots, whose motto is *Independence or Death?*

It is not a notorious fact that before the Commissioners reached the shores of their country, the startling news of the battles of Palo Copado and El Yaque, of Marmolejo and Chacuey, where plenty of Dominican blood was shed on both sides, had already crossed the sea?

If the revolution was limited to the Haytian border, why was it that Baez, who was so mindful of carrying Mr. Wade to Azúa, did not take him also to the other towns constituting the rest of the province? Why did he, by the use of reprehensible means, prevent general Sigel and other gentlemen from making an excursion to the rich districts which spread from the Yaque to the Pedernales? Was it not for fear that his curious guests might be satisfied of the fact that his despotic rule does not extend beyond the capital, on the whole important province of Azúa de Compostela?

Again, if the revolution has no supporters outside the territory it occupies, and, if Baez is in full and peaceful possession of the whole republic, why do the prisons continue to be filled with worthy patriots? Why is so much Dominican blood shed on the scaffold? Why has the reign of terror substituted the regular government? Why are the Dominican proscripts so numerous on foreign shores? And, why did the American Commissioners not decide to visit other places besides those that were beforehand pointed out to them by the annexionist government? Why did they not go to San Francisco de Macoris, where the population refused to take part in the plebiscit of 1870?

We feel authorized by all these considerations to conclude,

that the information taken as a basis by the Commissioners for the confection of their Report, was furnished by Baez and the annexionist authorities, not by the enlightened circles nor the popular classes; the only sources whence their inspirations should have emanated.

Should the preceding remarks not be sufficient to confirm our opinion in regard to the Commissioners' partiality, we may still bring in the support of it the hasty and favorable appreciation they very untimely make of General Baez, officiously trying to justify his last usurpation of power, without fearing that their spontaneousness might create natural suspicions about their sincerity and the disinterestedness of their ulterior views.

There would be no ground for any remark if, in speaking of the Dominican government, they had merely described the man that presides over it with reference to his political antecedents, without wounding other people's susceptibilities, or altering historical traditions. But it is provoking, it is something that cannot be explained but to the disgrace of the Commissioners, that they should have ventured to adulterate the truth of facts and to give a wrong account of events to them unknown.

They have not only erred in attributing to Baez the honor of having obtained the presidency of the Congress that created the new institutions, on the separation of the republics of Santo Domingo and Hayti, but they have made a historical mistake in stating that in 1848 he was exalted to the presidency both for *his education, fortune and public services*, and the common belief that he was the only man that could heal the wounds inflicted by civil and foreign wars.

Had the Commissioners more attentively examined the national traditions, they would have found that the San Cristobal Constituent Congress, that which created in 1844

the new institutions, was presided by the distinguished citizen Manuel María Valencia, who had not been ordained yet. And, if Baez was elected to the presidency in 1849, he cannot boast of a free and spontaneous election by the people, since he was indebted for it to the manœuvres and orders of Santana, who having received it from the hands of Don Santiago Espailat, who refused it, being unwilling to accept it under a disgraceful guardianship, placed it in the hands of Baez as the only one, among his lieutenants, who was disposed to second his proditory views. *

By an attentive study of the past, they would have found that the Dominicans reckon their times of anarchy by the number of Baez's administrations, this man having never ascended to power in a legal way, and having therefore been unable to secure for the people the freedom and order that other chiefs have been happy to maintain.

Then, instead of supposing that there is not one, among the opponents of the present administration, that has at any time charged with deficiency the supreme magistracy of the country, they would have discovered that there is no Dominican statesman but is in possession of sufficient evidence to show the illegalities under which it labors from its origin.

Then, finally, would they have been satisfied that the most unwearied conspirator there has been among the Dominicans, is Baez, to whom we are indebted for those *civil commotions* which have distracted the country for a *long period, paralyzing the industries, weakening the trade* and

* From the official Bulletin of the 29th October 1857, belonging to Baez's second administration, the following lines are abstracted:

It is well to remark that Santana knows how to make himself elected in the person of another individual, as he intended to be in that of Don Santiago Espailat (who saved himself from infamy by stating that he was too old to be prostituted) and as he subsequently tried with the present president, who was made to pay as an exile for having thrown off his tutelage during the happy days of his presidency.

impoverishing the Republic. (Baez revolted in 1843, 1844, 1849, 1855, 1856, 1859, 1860, 1864, 1865, and 1867.)

This is the historical truth as preserved by the national traditions, and we feel satisfied that, in consigning it here, in order to rectify the errors contained in the Commissioner's Report, we have clearly shown the partiality of their investigations.

III.

It appears that the commissioners thought it was not enough for them to enhance the personal and political merits of Baez, if they did not try, at the same time, to place Cabral and Luperon in a ridiculous and odious position. They wanted, seemingly, to prevent any possibility of a conscientious and just parallel, which might destroy the good effect their work was expected to accomplish.

In no other way can it be accounted that, setting aside the prudence and circumspection becoming their position, they should seize the poisoned weapon of calumny to injure the character of those two respectable notables, charging them with faults they never committed, and with views they are far from sheltering, whatever the annexionists may say to the contrary.

Were it true, as the Commissioners affirm, that General Cabral has lost the confidence of the country in consequence of a want of ability in his administration, he would not be now the head of the revolutionary movement nor would he have been able to rule over the Southern districts during two succeeding years.

The elements of popularity which the hero of Santomé and La Canela has always controlled, and the high respect which his character commands, are not the result of his political ability, but of his disinterestedness, his probity and

generosity, and the great services that, as a soldier, he has rendered to his country on the fields of battle.

If the commissioners had judged the man, free from passion and interested views, we know that they would not have descended to the childish trick of trying to discover in the modest title of *chief of the Revolution*, which heads all the official papers issued at San Juan, a proof of his conviction that he is not presently *the legal chief of the Republic*. They would, on the contrary, have perceived in that very circumstance, his moderation, his prudence, his sense, and his great regard for the republican practices.

It would be ridiculous for General Cabral to pretend now the reassumption of the legitimate authority, merely because he was in former times constitutionally invested with it. So foolish an aspiration exclusively belongs to Baez, who, after the style of Bomba in Naples, and the Bourbons in Spain, has since 1849, been afflicted with the laughable mania that the legitimate authority of the Republic is inherent to his person.

General Cabral is well aware that, so far, he only represents the principle of legal authority delegated to him in his locality by the inhabitants of one of the five provinces that make up the Republic; and, as long as the revolution does not spread to the others, he will only be seen to act in virtue of the belligerent right accorded to him by international law, and by the will of a large number of his fellow-citizens.

The humiliating compliance of the commissioners with the wishes of Baez, and their remarkable disposition to second in every respect his political views, are, however, still more evident in the violent and hard judgement they are pleased to pass on General Luperon; that soldier of Capotillo, who, raising from obscurity, has been able to keep fresh the laurels he won during the crusade for the restauration;

who has maintained his position, sufficiently high to make him equal to the task of detaining the hand of treason, appealing now to his companions of 1863 with the following words of Henry the IV : *Follow me, you will always meet me on the path of republican duty.*

No ; General Luperon is not a bandit ; *he is not stained with crime*, nor does he enumerate among *his main exploits sundry robberies and piratical operations on the coast.*

Like General Cabral's, his record is adorned by glorious feats of arms, by evidence of unsurpassed patriotism and acts of disinterestedness, for which he deserves the esteem of the Dominicans, and the regard and respect of foreigners.

If President Grant wantonly gave orders to the commanding officer of the Seminole to persecute him as an outlaw, when he acted against Baez's government with the steamer *Restauracion* ; and, if Minister Paul, of Venezuela, was rash enough to call him a pirate, these mere facts only prove a great contempt of the duties of neutrality, the result of views not less insane than those that have impelled the Commissioners to stand on the rough ground of personalities.

Cabral and Luperon are patriots of honorable antecedents, let their political rivals say what they will ; and the revolution that they head in concert, is based on national sentiment, affected by the illicit aspirations of Baez and President Grant.

The resources on which the revolution depends, are Dominican, as well as the blood which is shed in its defence. It obtains nothing from Hayti, that, overwhelmed by the constant threat of the American guns, cannot understand that, in the interest of her own preservation, she ought to be less strict in the observance of the neutrality which has been forced upon her.

No value is to be attributed, against this position, to the

curious fact of the Commissioners having examined *Haytian prisoners speaking only the language of the Haytians, and having in their hands muskets bearing the Haytian stamp*. It is notorious to all, that the Haytian conspirators now find an asylum and protection in Santo Domingo ; also, that Baez forced his authority on the people by means of a revolution fostered by Salnave, with Haytian resources, vessels and arms ; and it requires no great effort to guess, that the prisoners presented to the Commissioners were mere political refugees, acting advisedly in the farce, and, that the muskets they saw in their hands, were the same that the Montecristi regenerators made use of to seize the power from Cabral's hands, and which are still kept in the national armouries, to the reproach and shame of the annexionists.

We feel again satisfied that in the above refutation of the false assertions contained in the Commissioners' Report, we have repeatedly shown how partially and violently they performed thier displeasing task.

IV.

The North American Commissioners, that we have seen so misguided in judging the revolutionary chiefs, have shown, in the appreciation of the causes of the troubles that distract our country, the greatest inexperience, a want of political sense, and a complete ignorance of the Dominican traditions.

Thus only can be explained their having found the main source of the difficulties which obstruct the march of the Republic, in the *provincial jealousy existing between the people of the Southern district, and those inhabiting the great district north of the central chain of mountains*.

The sectional rivalries the reporters have dreamt of, do not exist, nor have ever existed, except in the feverish mind

of some ambitious men, willing to create them and make them subservient to their personal aspirations, as they have in cold blood done with all the other misfortunes of the Dominican society.

If the citizens of Cibao were ill-disposed towards the citizens of the other provinces, they could never find a more legal pretext to give vent to such evil passions than is now offered them, the country being despotically ruled by the only Southern man that has never been a brother to them; the man that ruined them in 1857 with the violent financial measures which gave rise to the revolution of the 7th of July; the man that from old Spain opened hostilities against them during the days of our glorious restauration.

It is, however, in Cibao, in the district they suppose so ill disposed, that Baez finds more support, that he can maintain his authority with less bloodshed, that his outrages are fewer, that he is better accepted.

Nor is the source of the Republic's misfortunes to be found in the ambition and lawlessness of the military chiefs, brought forth amid the struggles of the political parties, and the two epopees that embellish the pages of our national history. An honest and intelligent government that, being guided by Dominican sentiments, did not think of doing wrong, but right, and would try to secure the peace, and maintain the independence of the country, would certainly find in each of those men a slave to law, a sentry of order, a soldier of freedom.

The disease that afflicts the Republic must be traced further back. It comes from the anti-national ideas fostered by the school of Santana, and now maintained by Baez. It has its source in the eagerness to make a sudden fortune, even at the sacrifice of the future of the country, which has been shown by some Dominican politicians long since; witness the abortive plan of a protectorate in 1843;

the reincorporation to Spain realized in 1861, and the annexation to North-America, which is now in the condition of a chrysalis. It comes, finally, from the social disorder carefully worked by the tyranny of Santana's government, which is anxiously being carried to perfection by the tyranny of the government of Baez, the most proficient of all his disciples.

Such are the causes of the troubles which periodically alter the harmony of the great Dominican family, which have nothing to do with the covetousness of the merchants of the neighboring islands, or the inordinate pretensions of the Haytians. These, from Geffrard to Saget, have all renounced altogether to the aggressive policy, and only think of cultivating relations of peace, friendship and commerce with their former rivals, on the basis of a mutual acknowledgment of the sovereignty and independence of either people.

V.

Having ascribed the restriction of local liberty, not to the bad tendencies of the present administration, but to the recurrence of the civil struggles, the Commissioners then give us a brief dissertation on our Municipal Councils being apparently very well satisfied with the persons composing them, in whose declarations they noted spontaneity, not being, of course, inclined to suppose them *mere formalities to which they were compelled*. Then, they make a succinct historical statement of the Spanish incorporation, judging of the reasons which prevented the consolidation of Santana's work; being preliminary to a portion of the Report most deserving of an impartial and dispassionate study and examination: that which relates to the wish for annexation.

The Commissioners state that the occupation of the Republic by Spanish forces, in 1861, was effected without the consent of the majority of the Dominicans, it being the exclusive work of Santana and other men who took the people by surprise, with the aid of the Spanish men of war. But, in acknowledging this fact, to a certain extent true, for there was really no consultation of the people's will, and the event was consummated by surprise, they dexterously conceal that Baez is repeating with remarkable exactness the dark history of those days; and, by a tergiversation of the truth of facts, they hold themselves responsible for the legality of the late proceedings, assuring the spontaneousness of the people in their wish for annexation, and averring that all the classes rest on this chrysalis their best hopes.

The rising of the Seibo on the 13th of January 1869, that of San Cristobal on the 10th of June of the same year, the occupation of Samana by General Luperon, the insurrection of Puerto Plata in 1870, the revolution of the South, which reckons two years of an active existence, the late events of Cibao, the numerous imprisonments, and proscriptions, the scaffolds drenched with the blood of Herrera and Mercedes, Evangelista and Silvestre, Aquino and Couto, Félix and Scrokin, Miranda and Benites, Franco and Heredia, Curiel and Volta, Vallona and Gomez, Perdomo, Alonso and Rodriguez Objío, all that is of no account for these diplomatic investigators.

It has no meaning in the eyes of them who obey to an express mandate: those eloquent protests of the national sentiment, treacherously wounded by the shameful manœuvres of the annexionist champions, speak nothing to consciences that are gnawed by a vile interest. To them, there is no meaning in the imposing presence of the American men of war on the Dominican waters, or in the scan-

dalous protection that in all ways is President Grant giving to the treacherous Dominicans, wishing, no doubt, to keep them in power until they deliver him the manacled victim that they intend to sacrifice to his greediness.

But impartial men, that are never mistaken, for they observe without prejudice, and weigh the facts without hasteness, know that the annexation chrysalis is the work of speculation, wantonness and violence; that the clamorous plebiscit of 1870, was but a ridiculous farce, which would incite to laugh, had it not be stained with blood; and that the great majority of the Dominicans do not willingly accept the North American rule, for they preserve intact their love for their independence, of which they have given unequivocal evidence in former occasions.

All impartial men know that the disastrous end of the Spanish annexation, was not the result of mean rivalries between natives and peninsulars, or of the common aspirations to sinecures; nor was it determined by the strictures of the high functionaries, or the policy by them inaugurated. It was produced by the want of spontaneity in the act, by the violence with which it was carried out, by the blood shed by Rivero in Santiago, by Campillo in Guayabin, and by Santana in Moca and in San Juan; by the historical reminiscences, by glorious traditions, by the rooting in the public mind of the principles of sovereignty and independence proclaimed by Sanchez in the Puerta del Conde on the 27th February 1844.

Had the Commissioners spoken in this way, they would have paid a tribute to historical truth, giving a splendid testimony of their being guided by a sense of justice. But, since they have done otherwise, because it was contrary to their views to reveal dangerous secrets to the American people, it devolves upon us to make that revelation, in order to set all things right and to adduce this new eviden-

ce in corroboration of the judgement that we are maintaining.

VI.

The Commissioners' assertion, that the public sentiment, which they suppose favorable to annexation, is specially due to the presence in that country of the North American colonists imported during the Haytian administration, has not only no foundation in fact, but, were it certain, such circumstance would constitute, by itself, one of the strongest reasons that could be adduced, that there does not exist, among the Dominicans, that spontaneousness which they have so eagerly undertaken to exaggerate.

But the social and political condition of those colonists, most of them ignorant and wretched, is not the best calculated to arouse favorable conceptions with respect to their nationality, or to lean the balance of public opinion in favor of their private interests. Nor is it true, as we have already shown, that the Dominican people is disposed to beg a foreign aid, in consequence of a sad experience of their inability to maintain the independence that has cost them so many sacrifices.

If the Commissioners have, in the course of their investigations, come to so erroneous a conclusion, this is due to their having drawn their notions only from official sources, being kept from a contact with the masses by the impertinent zeal of the annexionist authorities, or by the restrictions to them imposed by the precepts they had to obey.

The personal guarantees they enjoyed during their stay in the country, the regard shown to them by the people, their undisturbed peace both in sleeping and travelling, was not the result of the popularity of the annexation idea they were supporting; it was a consequence of the condition of

the people, of their virtues, their education and their morality.

Being ushered as emissaries of peace, they had no reason to wonder at the amicable, if not enthusiastical, reception offered to them, the less so, since in advance of us, they could not but acknowledge that *the physical, mental, and moral condition of the Dominicans was found to be much more advanced than had been anticipated*: they found them to be *courteous, respectful and polite, kind and hospitable, honest and inoffensive, temperate, tolerant and industrious*.

We refer to this circumstance, by way of digression, not only moved by national pride, but in order to show that we are not influenced by passion. We are as well disposed to support truth as to oppose falsehood, according as we meet with either in the Report that we are refuting.

VII.

Having made a rapid statement of the education and the political condition of the masses, reducing the number of the whole population of the Republic to 150.000, which allows to the southern towns but an insignificant part, the Commissioners expatiate in long and exaggerated considerations, on the resources of the country, its mineral products, the character of its soil, the proportion capable of cultivation, its agricultural products, fisheries, climate and health earthquakes and hurricanes, rivers, bays and harbors, indulging more particularly in the beautiful description of the bay of Samaná; just as if it were intended to show more clearly than the other exaggerated descriptions, that all of them were written under preconceived plans, in order to increase the annexation enthusiasm, and enlarge the number of votes that General Grant might count upon in both Houses of Congress.

That duty being fulfilled, and it was probably the most important part of their commission, those gentlemen state that they *made a careful and prolonged investigation into the important subject of the public debt*, which, in the interest of Baez, they reduce studiously and maliciously to the lowest point, trying seemingly to forcibly bring it down to the sum that was stipulated in the treaty of 1869 for the final sale of the country. (*)

But the Commissioner's statements on the amount of the debt, acknowledged or to be acknowledged, and on that of the revenue of the Republic, are not clear and precise enough to afford a true measure of either.

It is true that the Dominican Government, are themselves in need of that measure, entangled, as they are, in the labyrinth of an arbitrary proceeding, contrived by evil passions to damage others interests, and rights legitimately possessed. But this circumstance does not lessen in the least the responsibility that the Commissioners have incurred before the public conscience, in making themselves accomplices in all the inordinate tendencies of the annexionists.

General Cabral having been exalted to the presidency of the Republic by the direct and universal vote of the Dominican people, all his administrative acts were stamped with the seal of a complete legality, which admits of no doubt or objection of any kind. The idea of ascribing a spurious origin to the pecuniary obligations, entered into by his administration, is of no more value than denying the same binding force to the political treaties made by him. If it is an unquestionable fact that Baez's government cannot disavow

(*) That, and nothing more, is the tendency of the law on the public debt, confirmed by the *Senado Consultor* on the 21st April last, which crowned the work of spoliation commenced by the Executive on the 16th December 1870, in issuing the decree that assigns the value of twenty per centum to the bonds paid as money through that Department, during three succeeding years.

the Dominican American treaty, because it was the work of Cabral, it is also a fact that he has no right to refuse the total payment of the debts incurred by him.

To establish a contrary precedent would be to undermine the foundation of public morality, to destroy all social guarantees, to put property in jeopardy, to authorize spoliation, and to try and throw the Dominican republic into the greatest confusion. To this, and nothing more, would amount the legislation of a country where the administrations observed the plan of undoing each what the preceding one had done, and where the usurping tyrants were held to be better qualified than the constitutional magistrates.

If, as may be supposed, all the information about the public debt collected by the Commissioners, whose partiality has been shown, is of the same nature as that which has been furnished with respect to the debts not incurred by the administrations of Baez, the only ones that seem to have been duly specified, it is a very poor return for so costly an expedition, since they have left in the dark the subjects on which they ought to have thrown more light.

We might add a good deal in corroboration of this assertion; but we have to keep within certain limits. We hope, however, that the above reasoning will suffice to show that dishonesty has dictated all that has been done in regard to the inexact examination of the public debt.

VIII.

If the investigations made by the Commissioners for discovering the amount of the public debt, did not afford the expected results, those made for ascertaining the donations and grants of land and national properties are much more unsatisfactory.

In the Inventory made by them, those only are to be

found that are too important to be concealed, or such as were made by Baez's predecessors, not with the view of making proselytes to the annexation scheme, but with the noble end of stimulating the progress of the Republic by all means.

But not a word is spoken about the distribution made among the most prominent annexionists of the houses, farms and grounds belonging to the State, nor of the large quantity of public lands which the government has given out to secure the support of many ignorant officers, who, on discovering their mistake, would be the greatest obstacle the americans would meet with, should they ever establish themselves in this country.

Many of those donations may be seen in the acts of the Senate, published in the St. Domingo Official Bulletin; there are others still concealed in the shadows of mystery; and to discover them, an investigation would be necessary more impartial and scrupulous than that made by the members of the scrutinizing Commission.

In confirmation of this fact, we refer to the acts of Baez's Senate, to the important revelations made in Washington by Mr. Raymond Perry, the author of the annexation treaty, and to the articles that, for the elucidation of the question, has begun to publish the "Pabellon Dominicano," the official organ of the liberating national revolution.

IX.

The history, and the description of the boundaries which divide the two nationalities that occupy the island, being made, the commissioners devote a part of their Report to their impressions about the more or les attachment of the Dominicans to political independence; and here is to be seen, not only the falsehood of the information which gave

them the starting point, but the eagerness of their endeavors to stamp with the seal of their approval, all the fabulous stories invented by the annexation faction, from the beginning of the negotiations.

The diplomatic investigators state, that the following question having been put to the Dominicans, say : "In case the independence of the Dominican Republic were possible, would you prefer it to annexation ?" the general answer was, "We would prefer independence, but independence is impossible."

And without stopping to consider that the individuals thus interrogated, were myrmidons paid by the government, or persons detained by the police, and frightened unto such affirmations; and without taking notice of the protests made by an armed people, and those addressed in writing to the American Senate by many Dominican proscribers of respectability and wealth; nor of the prevailing terrorism, and the necessity of foreign aid under which Baez labors, for his action; of the national history, and the other circumstances related in the course of this refutation,—the Commissioners assure, with a masterly tone, *that this latter declaration is the result of a true insight into the condition of the country, and the only conclusion to which a thoughtful lover of that country can come*; and they try to prove it, showing, that *Historically, the Dominican Republic has never maintained any real independence, with the exception of the very brief period after its first separation from Spain*; that, *its most bitter foe, the Haytian Republic, has always been in defiant possession of a valuable portion of its territory*; and to make things still worse, they add, that political leaders are never wanting, *ready, on the slightest provocation to league with this bitter enemy, and to bring murder and pillage upon their country.*

Still, not satisfied with having drawn that awful picture,

they go on stating that the Dominicans have never been more than *technically independent*, for they have been sometimes subject to the Spanish rule, and sometimes submitted to the whim of England, and, at some periods, they have been the victims of the piracies and frequent invasions organized in the neighboring islands.

But, what would be the use of following the Commissioners through that long series of historical errors and false assertions? Is it not natural to conclude, from those we have cited as examples, that those that have been omitted must have been also forged by minds chained to the general plan, contrived to induce the North American people to welcome with enthusiasm a scheme, from the realization of which many politicians anticipate large profits for themselves?

A single glance at the files of the Santo Domingo Official Bulletin, will be sufficient for any one to be satisfied that the Commissioners merely opened those unauthenticated pages, to draw from them their inspirations, meanly repeating the false ideas of the annexionists; no matter whether they were contradicted by almost all the correspondents of the press of the Union, that have, with rare exceptions, impugned the judgements contained in the Report of the Commissioners.

The studied formule agreed upon for giving color to the ratification of the plebiscit, was not well calculated to remove this suspicion, to a great extent confirmed by their alleged belief that the annexation proposed by Baez, and supported by President Grant, *is the only means the Dominicans have of securing their independence.*

What, then, are the Commissioners' reasons for adopting so wanton an opinion? This has been deficient, and abounds in remarkable faults that make it unacceptable. The Dominican's attestation? No; they only consulted

the annexionist Government and their myrmidons, not the people, who are either on the field, or bent under the yoke of the bloody tyranny that overwhelms them. The national History? Neither. They had no time to study it, nor any impartial teacher to learn it from.

The Commissioners based all their opinions on the information furnished by the annexionist party, and, therefore, did not fulfill their mission with the faithfulness that the importance of the subject demanded. Their acts are stained with a partiality which makes them liable to the charge of complicity in the illegitimate aspirations of Baez and Grant.

The proofs that we have adduced fully authorize this impartial judgement, which we submit to the public conscience, in hopes that its sentence will be in our favor.

CONCLUSION.

Being satisfied that we have fulfilled a sacred duty, we put an end to this brief refutation, firmly believing that we have maintained in it the cause of truth and justice.

We are not unaware that, although its only merit lies in the purity of the motives which led us to write it, it will stir up, against us, the hatred of the bad Dominicans, who breathe the annexation atmosphere; but, on the other hand, we cherish the hope that it will obtain the approval of the good, who will support our endeavors to save the independence of our country.

Curaçao May 2nd 1871.

MANY DOMINICANS.

APPENDIX.

Although it be a republican practice to invest the chief of the State with the power of initiating the negotiation of the international treaties, it is a strict rule that treaties are not binding, nor are they law, before they have obtained the sanction of the legislative power, and passed through the indispensable formality of the exchange of ratifications.

This common rule, which is known to the generality of politicians, has been entirely forgotten by the North American Commissioners, in speaking of the treaty for the lease of Samaná. This is as yet but a simple project, since it has not yet obtained *the approval and consent of the Senate of the United States*, nor has, therefore, the time arrived for the ratifications stipulated in article IV, which is the only thing which can impart to it the indispensable legal force.

We have affirmed that this trivial rule was forgotten by the North American Commissioners, for they could not, otherwise, have carried their insincerity to the extreme of considering the United States in legal possession of Samaná, since they state that, *having not relinquished the possession of it, but constantly enjoyed the use and occupation thereof as a naval station, the rent due was in default for more than one year.*

It is easily perceived by this single fact, that the Commissioners, *during their investigations into the affairs of the Dominican Republic* played but a ridiculous and dishonorable part, serving blindly and at the expense of their political character the spurious interest of Baez and Grant. Thus only could they have investigated every thing just in opposition to truth and reality.

The United States are not, and cannot be, in legal possession of Samaná, where the Dominican flag still waves, in proof of jurisdiction and dominion, notwithstanding the fact that on the solitary "Cayo Carenero" the flag of the stars and stripes may be seen isolated and threatening. The simple appropriation of that bit of uninhabited land, gives to the possessor no right over the rest of the country, but

serves only to make patent an act of force and violence condemned by all international law among the civilized world.

So long as the Perry-Gautier treaties do not, by the action of the Senate at Washington, become a law of the Republic, none of the stipulations has any validity, nor is binding for either contracting party. It is clear, therefore, that the execution of any of their clauses, is illegal.

This being premised, it will be easily perceived that those treaties being still undecided, or having rather been once rejected and another time deferred, the United States are not, and cannot be, in legitimate possession of the bay of Samaná, nor can they use it as a naval station; no matter if one or more American men of war come to anchor in those waters, as may be freely done by all foreign vessels on the Dominican shores.

Now, the United States being not in possession of Samaná, and the lease treaty being not in force, whence does that rent proceed, which, according to the Commissioners, *has been in default for more than one year*? How can there be any rent, before the treaty has reached the point of its execution? Why should the United States pay a rent for that which they do not possess, or how could the Dominican Republic claim a rent for what she still occupies?

These considerations justify the supposition that some disguised view has guided the Commissioners in that part of their Report which we are now alluding to.

Knowing that Baez could not, without a new help, maintain himself in power long enough to carry out his plan, they have contrived to pave the way that Grant may overcome the first obstacles, by again giving aid to his ally; no matter if he does it with the same illegality as, by his own will, and without the authorization of Congress, he did on the last year.

We record this remarkable circumstance, in the form of an appendix, as a complement of the opinions we have maintained in the course of this brief refutation.

Curaçoa, May 2d, 1871.

MANY DOMINICANS.

